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Area Briefs

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6. CHILE: THE DEATH OF A CHILEAN PROFESSOR FOLLOWING HIS INTERROGATION BY THE STATE SECURITY AGENCY HAS PROMPTED BOTH THE COURTS AND THE INTERIOR MINISTR TO ORDER INVESTIGATIONS. THIS, THE MOST SERIOUS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION IN CHILE THIS YEAR, IS A SEVERE RELAPSE IN CHILE'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD AND WILL FURTHER DAMAGE THE REPUTATION OF THE SECURITY AGENCY, THE PREDECESSOR OF WHICH WAS INVOLVED IN THE LETELIER ASSASSINATION IN WASHINGTON. THE HIGHLY PUBLICIZED CASE COMES ON THE EVE OF THE CHILEAN SUPREME COURT'S RULING ON THE US EXTRADITION REQUEST FOR FORMER SECURITY CHIEF CONTRERAS IN CONNECTION WITH HIS AGENCY'S INVOLVEMENT WITH THE LETELIER ASSASSINATION. IT ALSO FOLLOWS ARGENTINA'S LOW-KEY REOPENING OF ITS INVESTIGATION OF POSSIBLE CHILEAN SECURITY AGENCY INVOLVEMENT IN THE ASSASSINATION IN 1974 OF CHILEAN EX-GENERAL PRATS IN ARGENTINA. THE PROFESSOR'S DEATH COULD BE THE INCIDENT THAT FINALLY COMPELS THE GOVERNMENT OR THE COURTS TO MOVE TO CURB THE EXCESSES OF THE SECURITY FORCES.

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